

FAQ

How do I know if my I-600A approval and fingerprints are still valid?

Your fingerprint clearance files expire 15 months after the date that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service received a response from the FBI, which is approximately 15 months from the date the FBI fingerprinted you. Your I-600A approval is valid for 18 months from the date of approval. If you are unsure if your fingerprints and I600A approval are still valid please contact us by email at ConsAdoptionAddis@state.gov.

What is the I-600 and when should I sign it and submit it?

The I-600 is the Petition to Classify an Orphan as an Immediate Relative. This form may be filed either in the United States or with the US Embassy in Ethiopia. When adoption service providers submit a case to the U.S. Embassy for review they must include an original I-600 form that has been signed by the adoptive parent(s) and notarized.

A consular officer from the consular section will notarize I-600 forms for adoptive parents for no charge. This service is available only between 1:00pm and 3:00pm on Monday through Thursday.

How can I pay the Embassy fees?

The Embassy Fees are:

- Immigrant visa application and surcharge fee - \$404 per child
- (I600) – Petition to classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative - \$720 for any additional non related child.

You or your adoption agency may pay these fees in U.S. dollars or Ethiopian birr. Fees must be paid in cash at the U.S. Embassy. We do not accept credit cards or any other currency.

Am I required to submit a Privacy Act waiver with my adopted child's case file?

Records pertaining to immigrant visa petitions and case files are protected by law. In all cases, Consular officials at the U.S. Embassy will contact adoptive parents directly with information regarding their case.

A Privacy Act waiver allows consular officials to copy an adoptive family's adoption agency so that question can be answered quickly, or to provide information regarding a case file which may help bring the case to resolution more quickly. Without a Privacy Act waiver we are unable to discuss a case with an adoption agency or members of Congress. We strongly encourage, but do not require, all adoptive parents submit a Privacy Act waiver.

What is the I-604 Determination on Child for Adoption?

Prior to approving the I-600 and issuing an immigrant visa, the consular officer must verify that the child for whom the petitioners are petitioning qualifies as an orphan under U.S. immigration law. In Ethiopia, a consular officer completes the I-604 Determination on Child for Adoption, reviewing evidence of the child's status as provided by the adoptive parent and/or adoption agency.

What is a birth relative interview? Why are we being asked to arrange a birth mother interview?

Frequently, a consular officer may request that you or your adoption agency help facilitate an interview between a biological relative of your child and a member of the adoption unit. These interviews are necessary to verify the facts presented in an adoption case. A birth relative interview often allows the I-604 Determination on Child for Adoption to be completed more quickly.

When does the medical exam take place?

All immigrant visa applicants are required to undergo a medical exam by a panel physician contracted by the U.S. Embassy to provide this service. The medical exam takes place after the child's new passport and birth certificate have been issued by the Government of Ethiopia. Most often a medical exam is valid for 6 months. Fees for the medical exam and any related laboratory charges are paid directly to the panel physician or laboratory, not the U.S. Embassy. If you think your child's medical exam has expired please contact us at ConsAdoptionAddis@state.gov.

Will my case be cleared more quickly if I travel to Ethiopia?

No. We understand that in some cases adoptive parents wish to travel to Ethiopia to spend more time with an adopted child and/or facilitate the submission of their case to the U.S. Embassy. However, please note that consular staff process cases in the order received, and we are unable to expedite any child's case simply because the adoptive parents are present in Ethiopia. If you choose to travel in advance of receiving an interview date for the child's immigrant visa please be prepared for a lengthy stay. We strongly suggest adoptive parents apply for an Ethiopian visa in advance of travel – please see the Ethiopia [Consular Information Sheet](#) for more information.

After my case is cleared how quickly can I schedule a visa interview appointment?

As soon as we are able to determine that an I-600 petition is clearly approvable and an adoption case is complete, adoptive parents will receive a clearance email from the Adoption Unit. Please reply to this email with three suggested interview dates that fit your travel schedule. We will do our best to honor the adoptive parents requests for visa interview dates.

How long will it take to issue my child's visa after the visa interview?

Please allow 48 hours for the visa to be printed. If your child has medical concerns, please request expedited visa processing by emailing the Adoption Unit at ConsAdoptionAddis@state.gov.

What is the difference between an IR3 and an IR4 visa?

If both parents have met the child before the foreign adoption was finalized, the child can be issued an IR-3 visa. Parents are required to submit copies of their passport pages to establish that they were present in Ethiopia prior to the final court decree. A child who enters the U.S. on an IR-3 visa will generally acquire U.S. citizenship upon entry.

If only one or neither of the adoptive parents has met the child before the foreign adoption was finalized, the child must be re-adopted in the United States. In such a case, the child is issued an IR-4 visa and will enter the U.S. as a Lawful Permanent Resident.

When do I need an I-864W Affidavit of Support form versus an I-864 and a copy of my most recent taxes?

Under U.S. immigration law, immigrants who will enter the U.S. as Lawful Permanent Residents are required to demonstrate financial support. Therefore, adopted children immigrating to the U.S. on IR-4 visas must have a completed I-864 Affidavit of Support from the petitioner (adoptive parent) supported by evidence of the petitioner's income or other means to support the immigrant child. This evidence usually consists of a copy of the petitioner's most recent tax return.

Immigrants who enter the U.S. and immediately naturalize, or become U.S. citizens on entry, are exempt from the requirement of demonstrating financial support. Therefore, adopted children travelling on IR-3 visas must submit a completed I-864W, which is a waiver of the I-864 requirement.

How do I make sure the adoption unit has my correct email address?

Your email address is normally submitted to the U.S. Embassy as part of your Privacy Act waiver, which allows us to contact your adoption agency on your behalf. Make sure that you write legibly and/or type your email address. If you believe we have an incorrect email address for your family, please send us an email at ConsAdoptionAddis@state.gov.

What if I have a question that is not answered here?

We encourage you to email us with any questions or concerns that you may have at ConsAdoptionAddis@state.gov.